

IN SENATE
OF
THE UNITED STATES,

JANUARY 7, 1818.

MEMORIAL.

To the honorable the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress assembled, the petition of the inhabitants of the county of Oneida, in the state of New York, as well manufacturers as others,

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH:

That the above county contains a greater number of manufacturing establishments, of cotton and woolen, than any county in the state, there being invested in said establishments, at least 600,000 dollars.

That, although the utmost efforts have been made by the proprietors to sustain those establishments, their efforts have proved fruitless, and more than three fourths of the factories remain necessarily closed, some of the proprietors being wholly ruined, and others struggling under the greatest embarrassments.

In this alarming situation, we beg leave to make a last appeal to the Congress of the United States. While we make this appeal, the present crisis, the extensive embarrassments in most of the great departments of industry, as well as the peculiar difficulty in affording immediate relief to manufacturers, are fully seen and appreciated. Yet your petitioners cannot believe that the legislature of the Union will remain an indifferent spectator of the wide spread ruin of their fellow citizens, and look on, and see a great branch of industry, of the utmost importance in every community, prostrated under circumstances, fatal to all future attempts at revival, without a further effort for relief. We would not magnify the subject, which we now present to Congress, beyond its just merits, when we state it to be one of the utmost importance to the future interests and welfare of the United States.

Before we proceed farther, and at the very threshold, we disclaim all legislative patronage or favor to any particular class or branch of industry at the expense of the other classes in the commu-

nity. We ask of Congress the adoption of no measure, for the relief of manufactures, which is not deemed consistent with sound national policy, and the best interests of the United States at large. But if a compliance with our prayers be the dictate of wisdom, and for the public good; if our application be justified by the examples of all wise and patriotic states; if no government of modern Europe is so short sighted, or regardless of its duties, as not to constantly watch over, and yield a study and protecting support to the manufacturers of the state, we humbly hope this appeal in behalf of American manufactures will not be made in vain.

That clothing for our citizens in peace, and our army and navy in war, are indispensable, and that the necessary supply should be independent of foreign nations, are positions that will be controverted by none. The last war afforded most lamentable proof; your soldiers, exposed to the inclemencies of a northern climate, were at times found fighting in their ranks almost naked. It will not escape observation, that national collision and hostility are most likely to arise with that nation, from whom our supplies are principally derived, and that the operations of war must be prosecuted on the ocean; hence, regular supplies being cut off, smuggling, violations of law, with all the concomitant evils experienced in the late war, are the certain consequences. The same disgraceful scenes are to be acted over and over again, to the deep reproach of the country. If the present manufactories are suffered to fall, the government will look in vain for means to avert those calamities. Surrounded with many embarrassments, government, during the war, saw fit to encourage manufacturing establishments, and those who embarked their capital, it is humbly conceived, were warranted in the expectation of such continuing support of government as should protect their interest against that foreign rivalry and hostility, which is now operating to their ruin. They had a right, as they conceive, to expect this from what the government owed to itself, and to the independence and best interests of the country, as well as from the example of other nations in like circumstances.

In reviewing the discussions on this great question, your petitioners feel themselves justified in saying, that the question has not been at all times fairly met on its true merits. We have been constrained to witness alarm sounded, as though a new principle was to be introduced, and the country now, for the first time, taxed for the mere benefit of manufactures. What can be more untrue and unjust? We need not remind the honorable the Congress of the United States, of what is known to all, that from the first establishment of the government, special regard has been had, in laying imposts and taxes, to the protection of domestic manufactures, by increasing the duties on imported articles coming in competition. Again, the tariff, in protecting manufactures, has been represented as taxing the farmer and planter for the benefit of the manufacturer, and hence, attempts have been made to excite popular prejudice against the latter. We need

not dwell on this topic, in showing how unjust to individuals and injurious to the country, the charge is. As it respects the manufacturing districts of the United States, there is no *distinct class of manufacturers*, no separation of the manufacturer and farmer; it is the farmer himself who is the manufacturer; he invests his money in manufacturing stock. With the exception of a few factories, in or near the great towns, by far the greater part of manufacturing stock will be found in the hands of the farmer.

Between different districts or states, one manufacturing and the other not, a different question arises, which resolves itself into a mere *equality or apportionment of taxes* on the different parts of the Union; and here it will be seen, on a view of the whole system of impost and taxes, that no injustice is done, as the manufacturing districts have, and still do contribute their full proportion to the public treasury. Of the internal taxes, it will appear, that they have paid an amount greatly beyond the numerical standard or rule of apportionment, prescribed by the constitution. The fact is not here mentioned for the purpose of complaint, but to show how fallacious it is to select the duty on a particular article, to settle the question of equality in the general appointment of taxes. We might again confidently appeal to the tariff of imports, and ask if the duty is not greater on many other articles than on *imported cloths*; (with the exception of certain coarse and almost useless cottons of the East Indies.) This is believed to be the case with most of the specific duties, and eminently so in some instances. Were the government to proceed much farther than is now contemplated, and bestow premiums for the encouragement of particular branches of industry, examples to justify the measure would be found in the wisest and best administered governments. While the provision in the constitution, *prohibiting any duty on exports*, favors the great staple productions of the south, it injures the domestic manufacturer, and is subversive of the great principle adopted by most nations, to *restrain the export of the raw material, necessary in manufactures*. But neither of this provision do your petitioners complain.

We hope to find excuse in the importance of the subject, for submitting to the consideration of Congress, the following principles of political economy, which have been adopted by the most enlightened governments, and are deemed not altogether inapplicable to the United States.

That the public good requires of government to restrain by duties, the importation of articles which may be produced at home, and to manufacture as much as possible of the raw material of the country.

That the branches of industry, particularly necessary or useful to the independence of community, ought to be encouraged by government.

That the most disadvantageous commerce, is that which exchanges the raw material for manufactured goods.

That any nation who should open its ports to all foreign importations, without a reciprocal privilege, would soon be ruined by the balance of trade.

The policy of Great Britain, in support of which, no wars however bloody, no expense however enormous, are too great a sacrifice, ought never to be lost sight of by the United States. That nation assumes to *manufacture for all nations, but will receive the manufactures of none.* So tenacious, so jealous is she of the first dawns of manufactures elsewhere, that she binds even the hands of her own colonists. The jealousy of parliament was excited, nearly a century ago, by the petty hat manufactory of Massachusetts, and an act of parliament actually passed, in the reign of George the Second, prohibiting the erection of furnaces in British America, for slitting iron.

The great Chatham, the least hostile to America of British ministers, in his speech in the house of lords, on the address to the throne, in 1770, expressed his utmost alarm at the first efforts at manufactures in America.

Mr. Brougham, a distinguished member of the British Parliament, recently declared in his place, that it was well worth while, at the close of the late war, to incur a loss on the exportation to the United States, in order to stifle in the cradle, our rising manufactures. It is in vain for any man to shut his eyes against the active rivalry and persevering hostility of British manufacturers; and when the capital, the deep-rooted establishments, the improved machinery, and the skill of the British manufacturer, protected as he always is by the government, are considered, it ought not to excite surprise that the American manufacturer, without the support of his government, is found unequal to the contest. But yielding to manufactories reasonable support in their infancy, the government will, at no distant period, find them able to defend themselves against foreign competition and hostility, and at the same time make ample returns to the nation for its protecting kindness.

It was the opinion of Mr. Hamilton, former Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, as well as of Sir James Stewart, that *no new manufactory can be established, in the present state of the world, without encouragement from government.*

It cost the English parliament a struggle of forty years, commencing in the reign of Edward third, to get the better of the established manufactures of Flanders. It is believed that much less encouragement from government would place the manufacturers of the United States on a secure foundation. While the writers of that nation are seen to highly commend the principle of Adam Smith, that *industry ought to be left to pursue its own course, without the interference of the legislature,* the government has, at all times, and under every vicissitude, turned a deaf ear to the lesson, as though it were intended for other nations, and carried legislative regulations into every department and avenue of industry. The British statute book groans under those regulations. The policy of the government has proved triumphant; immeasurable wealth flowed in upon the nation, giving it a power and control over other nations never before attained, and so long enjoyed by any people so inconsiderable in numbers.

But let no one imagine that a general system of manufactures is now proposed to be introduced into the United States. We would be understood as limiting our views to the manufactories already established, to save those, which have not already fallen, from the ruin which threatens them.

After all that the present manufactories can supply, there will remain to foreign importation an amount, it is believed, equal, if not exceeding the means of the country to pay for. That importation, let it be remembered, will be mostly from a country which shuts her ports against the productions of the United States, and keeps them so, unless the necessities of her manufactories, or hunger and sedition open them; and then the *fatal suspension* often proves, as the experience of the ill-fated shippers of bread stuffs, the present year, will attest, a mere decoy to ruin. Lord Sheffield, in the year 1783, declared that, except in time of war, there never was a market for American wheat in Great Britain, exceeding three or four years in the whole.

There was a time when the balance of trade, believed in both countries to be generally against the United States, was in some degree satisfied or counter-balanced by a favorable trade with the West-Indies; but a recent change of policy in the British Councils has cut off that resource, and the parent state prefers exposing her colonies to starvation, rather than open her ports to American commerce.

It is obvious how much that government presumes on its advantages over us, on the predilection of our citizens for British manufactures, and the influence of the liberal purchases in the South of the material for her cotton manufactures.

We hope to be excused in repelling the unwarrantable imputation bestowed on manufactories of woolen and cotton as being *injurious to the health and morals of the community*. On this point we may content ourselves with referring to the healthful sites of our factories, the spacious work-rooms, (required by the necessary machinery,) and appeal to every man who has visited a factory, for testimony against the imputation. What is the experience on the subject? Scotland manufactures not only what is required for its inhabitants, but about 5,000,000 dollars annually in the article of cotton alone, for exportation, and yet, in both its physical and moral character, that nation sustains a high elevation. We look in vain for evidence that the arms of Scotchmen have been withered by their manufactories, nor do we recollect the field of battle in Europe where the arms of any nation were found stronger in conflict.

To swell the tide of prejudice against manufactures, it is said that unreasonable prices for goods were demanded, at the period of the late war. To reason with such objections would be a mere waste of time. We might ask what merchant, mechanic, or farmer, in any age or country, ever forbore to raise his prices according to the demand in the market? It enters into first principles. Did the importer treble his first cost on his cloths, even on smuggled goods, and does he make the charge of extortion against manufactures? The

war unhinged every thing, and changed the whole order of society and course of business.

It might have been expected that the present fallen condition of manufacturers would have soothed prejudice and disarmed hostility. With all their alleged war profits, there are now none so poor. Is it not seen that the destruction of the present manufactories must inevitably produce the same evils of extravagant prices, in the event of a future war, as were experienced in the last?

As to the imputed effect of the tariff, in enhancing the prices of imported goods, it is believed that goods were never so low as under the operation of the present duties; and, so far as competition between domestic and foreign goods has contributed to this, credit is justly due to our manufacturers.

It is objected, that the entire industry of the country may be most profitably exerted in clearing and cultivating our extended vacant lands. But what does it avail the farmer, when neither in the nation from which he purchases his goods, or elsewhere, can he find a market for his abundant crops. Besides, the diversion of labor from agriculture to manufactures, is scarcely perceptible. Five or six adults, with the aid of children, will manage a cotton manufactory of two thousand spindles.

From the gloomy condition of the manufacturers, the mind, turning to another quarter, is cheered with the brightest prospects to others. In the more southern states, it is believed that the amount received, during the last year, from the export of two or three articles of agricultural produce only, exceed forty millions of dollars.

An appeal is made to the equity, to the patriotism, of the southern statesman: his aid and co-operation is invoked for the relief of the suffering manufacturers of the northern and middle states.

In conclusion, your petitioners humbly pray that provision may be made by law, for making the present duties on imported woollens and cottons *permanent*; for prohibiting the importation of cotton goods from beyond the Cape of Good Hope, for consumption or use in the United States, (according to the example of several European governments;) for restraining auction sales of goods; and for the more general introduction and use of domestic goods, in the army and navy of the United States.

Signed, &c.

Dated October 1, 1817.



